

Creating a National Cemetery in Northeast Florida

Since coming to Congress, I have pushed for the creation of a National Veterans Cemetery in Northeast Florida. A bill to create that cemetery (H.R. 1516) is close to becoming law. The legislation has passed the House and the Senate and now awaits action in a conference committee. It is my hope this bill will become law before year's end.

The measure creates a new national cemetery in Jacksonville, ensures state and local veterans' groups have a voice in regards to site selection, and gives the Secretary of the VA four months to develop a schedule for creating the Northeast Florida cemetery.

More than 100,000 veterans live and work in the counties I represent. There are currently no viable options for burial in a veteran's cemetery for these honorable citizens. This bill fixes that dire situation. I am confident that when we put this bill in front of President Bush, he will sign it.

Creating a national cemetery here is one of my top priorities. Since coming to office, I have sponsored language to do just that. Locating this cemetery in Northeast Florida keeps a sacred commitment the United States made to our veterans.

For information on ordering an American Flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, visit my Web site
<http://Crenshaw.house.gov> or call (202)225-2501.

Keeping Our Promise To Veterans

C O N G R E S S M A N

ANDER CRENSHAW

REPRESENTING FLORIDA'S 4TH DISTRICT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

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Ander Crenshaw
Prsr1 Std M.C.



Congressman Crenshaw leads the Pledge of Allegiance during the two-year 9/11 memorial held at Jacksonville Beach.

Concurrent Receipt - Promises Kept

Since the Civil War, most disabled military veterans have been able to collect disability pay or retirement pay, but not both. The issue of collecting both is called "concurrent receipt" and while a few veterans are allowed this benefit, many are not. I am working to change that fundamental inequity.

Current law provides concurrent receipt to all disabled Purple Heart recipients and veterans with combat related injuries resulting in 60 percent disability and higher. Under a proposal announced in late October, Congress is now on track toward providing concurrent receipt for more veterans than ever before by January 1, 2004.

The new plan adds full concurrent receipt for:

- All veterans with combat-related disabilities;
- All National Guard and Reservists with combat-related disabilities; and
- All military retirees with non-combat related disabilities at 50 percent or greater.

The legislation also creates a bipartisan blue-ribbon commission to review the current system and make certain all veterans are adequately compensated.



While this 10-year phase-in is longer than I had hoped for, I believe this solution is fair, responsible, and a tremendous step forward for disabled veterans. I will continue to push this issue forward because it's the right thing to do. We need to send a powerful message to those men and women who have fought for our freedom.

Congressman Crenshaw meets with the crew of the USS Kennedy to talk about the future needs of the Navy.

Paying Tribute to Veterans

It is fitting we pay tribute to the people who served in our armed services. This November, I will host a gathering of appreciation for over 150 veterans and their families at Naval Station Mayport. At this ceremony, I will have the honor of presenting 24 medals to veterans who took part in the World War II Normandy Invasion and over 120 medals to veterans who served in the Korean War.

Our country's freedom is only as strong as the people willing to defend it. The men and women of our armed services put their lives on a direct path of danger so that we might enjoy a free nation. These veterans deserve recognition and our appreciation.

Pictured below: Congressman Crenshaw presents Normandy Medal to veteran.

If you would like more information about medals or future ceremonies, please visit my Web site.

Sign up for Congressman Crenshaw's e-mail updates at
<http://Crenshaw.house.gov>

Crenshaw Protects Lake City VA Medical Center

I am pleased to report that a controversial plan to overhaul veterans' health care programs will not result in reduced services at the Lake City VA Medical Center. The Lake City facility is clearly top-notch and meets the needs of veterans of Northeast Florida and Southern Georgia.

When the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process began, the VA decided to consider a significant reduction of services at Lake City. I strongly objected to any attempt to reduce the high level of care and service our veterans are receiving. Making sure veterans have access to quality health care is one of my top priorities.

After much work, dialogue, and discussions with top officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I can report that the Lake City facility has been taken off the initial consolidation list. The CARES process is designed to focus resources to areas where they are needed most. That's why in October, I gave testimony to the CARES Commission that recommended targeting additional federal resources for expanding services at Lake City.

Through local, state, and federal actions, we are making significant progress in keeping the Lake City facility whole. A final decision on the Lake City facility is due near year's end. I will keep you informed of any developments.

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